FURNITURE HAVING LANDSCAPE CONTOUR

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Technical Field

The invention relates generally to furniture pieces which have a prominent portion bearing an accurate resemblance of a landscape contour such as a mountainous ridgeline viewed in profile. A method of manufacturing the furniture pieces is also disclosed.

2. Related Art

Known furniture pieces, for example chairs, typically have a back portion against which the back of a person's torso rests when the person is seated. In known furniture designs, the upper portion of this back has a uniform contour, or a symmetrical pattern which generally does not vary across the top surface of the back, that is, from one side to the other. See, for example, the back 110 of the related art chair 100 shown in Figure 1. Similarly, the upper portion of the back does not vary between chairs of a particular set, or more broadly, of a particular production run. This uniformity presents difficulties for those persons who desire a more creative or eclectic design when furnishing, for example, a summer home or vacation cottage.

Thus, a need exists for a unique design for the back portion of furniture pieces, and a method for producing the same, which overcome the deficiencies of the related art.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

To overcome the above deficiencies, the present invention provides a back structure which embodies a landscape contour derived from a mountain range profile or the like. A method of producing the landscape contour is also provided.

In a first general aspect, the present invention provides a seating unit comprising: a seat; and a back, wherein an edge of said back includes an aesthetic portion, and wherein said aesthetic portion patterned to resemble one of a plurality of preselected scenic silhouettes.

In a second general aspect, the present invention provides a method of constructing a modified seating unit with a characteristic aesthetic portion, said method comprising the steps of: providing a scenic aspect; deriving a contour line from said scenic aspect; providing a seating unit, said seating unit having a contourable portion to receive said a contour derived from said contour line; applying said contour line to said contourable portion of said unmodified seating unit; and modifying said contourable portion of said unmodified seating unit in accordance with said contour line to produce said modified seating unit.

In a third general aspect, the present invention provides a furniture piece comprising: a first portion having an edge formed in a contour shape, said contour shape resembling a plurality of preselected topographical contours.

The foregoing and other features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following more particular description of embodiments of the invention. It is to

be understood that both the foregoing general description and the following detailed description are exemplary, but are not restrictive, of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The features of the present invention will best be understood from a detailed description of the invention and an embodiment thereof selected for the purposes of illustration and shown in the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a chair of the related art;

Figure 2 is a perspective view of a chair comprising an embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 3 is a top view of the embodiment of Figure 2;

Figure 4 is a front view of the embodiment of Figure 2;

Figure 5 is a perspective view of a glider comprising an embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 6 is a perspective view of a swing comprising an embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 7 is a perspective view of a loveseat comprising an embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 8 is a perspective view of a rocker comprising an embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 9 is a perspective view of a chaise lounge comprising an embodiment of

the present invention;

Figure 10 is a perspective view of a tête-à-tête comprising an embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 11A is a front view of an alternative embodiment of a contoured portion of a chair of the present invention;

Figure 11B is a front view of an alternative embodiment of a contoured portion of a chair of the present invention; and

Figure 11C is a front view of an alternative embodiment of a contoured portion of a chair of the present invention.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Although certain embodiments of the present invention will be shown and described in detail, it should be understood that various changes and modifications may be made without departing from the scope of the appended claims. The scope of the present invention will in no way be limited to the number of constituting components, the materials thereof, the shapes thereof, the relative arrangement thereof, *etc.*, and are disclosed simply as an example of an embodiment. The features and advantages of the present invention are illustrated in detail in the accompanying drawings, wherein like reference numerals refer to like elements throughout the drawings. The present invention will be referred to herein as a "chair" for simplicity, but it should be understood that any

other suitable furniture piece may be embodied by the description of the invention.

One embodiment of the present invention is shown in Figure 2 as a chair 200. Chair 200 is shown in the style of an Adirondack chair, with the notable exception that the upper part of back or backrest 210 of chair 200 includes a contoured portion 220. Contoured portion 220 is an aesthetic portion of the backrest or back 210, and may include a scenic aspect or scenic silhouette which is derived from a particular view of some scenic location, such as, *inter alia*, a landscape contour, a topographical contour, a ridge line profile, a mountain range, or any similar representation of the surface features of a place or region. The back 210 is substantially planar, and the upper exposed edge which bears the contour is substantially perpendicular to the plane of the back 210. In the illustrative embodiment shown, contoured portion 220 has been modified to resemble a particular landscape contour, in this case the ridgeline presented by a mountain peak when viewed in profile. The back 210 also optionally includes a descriptive message 230 related to the particular landscape contour. For the particular ridgeline represented by contoured portion 220, the descriptive message 230 may include, for example, the name of the mountain peak and its elevation or a pertinent date. The descriptive message 230 may be applied to the contoured portion 220 by any suitable method, such as, *inter alia*, painting, engraving, carving, etching, branding, scoring, embossing, plating, or molding.

Chair 200 further comprises armrests 241, 242 substantially parallel to one another, and operatively attached to back 210. Back 210 is itself operatively attached to upper rear brace 272 and lower rear brace 271, and to seat portion 281 and first and

second legs 251, 252, respectively. Back 210 is operatively supported on the base formed by the seat portion 281 and first and second legs 251, 252, so that back 210 may be adjusted from an upright position to an angled or reclined position. Seat portion 281 includes a plurality of slats 282 which are attached to first and second legs 251, 252 in such a manner that the seat portion 281 follows the contour presented by first and second legs 251, 252. Arm rests 241,242 are further attached to first and second vertical supporting legs 261, 262. The lower ends of first and second vertical supporting legs 261, 262, as well as the lower ends of first and second legs 251, 252, rest upon a ground surface (not shown).

In the illustrative embodiment, back 210 further includes a single wide, tapered slat 212 located substantially in the center of the back 210. Tapered slat 212 retains sufficient width at its upper end to receive the aforementioned descriptive message 230. Back 210 also includes a filler portion which comprises a plurality of longitudinally extending slats 211 of approximately equivalent lateral width. The longitudinally extending slats 211 extend longitudinally from a first lower end of said back to a second upper end of said back. Further, the longitudinally extending slats 211 substantially fill the space between the central portion occupied by the tapered slat 212 and the outermost lateral boundaries of the back 210. Note that in the alternative embodiment (not shown), the aesthetic portion including contoured portion 220 extends across the entire upper portion of back 210. In alternative embodiments, however, the aesthetic portion, including contoured portion 220, may extend across only a portion of the upper portion of

back 210. For example, the contoured portion may be limited to the single wide, tapered slat 212.

In an alternative embodiment, a suitably contoured cushion assembly or other padded device may be removably added to the illustrative embodiment of Figure 2 to enhance the comfort of the user.

Chair 200 may be constructed of any suitable material, such as, *inter alia*, wood, plastic, resin, polyethylene, wood-adhesive compounds, metal, paper, or combinations thereof. Depending upon the type of material from which the chair, seating unit, or other furniture piece is made, a method of transposing a particular landscape contour to the furniture will be described.

The method of constructing a furniture piece or seating unit with a characteristic aesthetic portion, as described above, begins with a step of selecting the desired scenic silhouette. The scenic silhouette may be an image provided on a tangible or intangible medium such as a postcard, photograph, online image, magazine image, freehand sketch, or other artwork. From the selected image, a contour line is produced or derived. This step may involve simply tracing the desired contour line on the image. Alternatively, a more sophisticated process may be employed, such as one involving stencils, computers, overhead projectors, projection equipment, image manipulation software, or a pantograph. Once the desired contour line is produced, the contour line may be applied to the seating unit using known techniques for image transfer, followed by modification of the seating unit via techniques of employing manual modification, a power tool, or a

computer numerical control (CNC) device. If applicable depending on the material the furniture piece is constructed with, for example in a resin molding process, a mold may be manufactured wherein the contour line is present and readily applied when the seating unit is cast or extruded.

Figures 3 and 4 illustrate top and front views, respectively, of the chair depicted in Figure 2.

Referring to Figure 5, an embodiment of the present invention is shown, this embodiment in the form of a glider 500.

Referring to Figure 6, an embodiment of the present invention is shown, this embodiment in the form of a swing 600.

Referring to Figure 7, an embodiment of the present invention is shown, this embodiment in the form of a loveseat 700.

Referring to Figure 8, an embodiment of the present invention is shown, this embodiment in the form of a rocker 800.

Referring to Figure 9, an embodiment of the present invention is shown, this embodiment in the form of a chaise lounge 900.

Referring to Figure 10, an embodiment of the present invention is shown, this embodiment in the form of a tête-à-tête 1000.

Figures 11A, 11B, and 11C, depict the contour portion 220 only of various embodiments of a chair using the present invention. The contour portion 220 can depict, or simulate, an existing landscape profile, or can simulate, a fictitious profile. For

example, the contour portion 220 in Figure 11A, may simulate a elevation profile of a mountain ridge line in Yosemite Park in California. Meanwhile, the contour profile 220 in Figure 11B may simulate a mountain profile described in a novel, such as book in the famous Harry Potter series. Further, the contour profile 220 in Figure 11C may simulate a elevation profile developed purely from the manufacturer's imagination.

The foregoing description of the present invention has been presented for purposes of illustration and description. It is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise form disclosed or to the materials in which the form may be embodied, and many modifications and variations are possible in light of the above teaching. Such modifications and variations that may be apparent to a person skilled in the art are intended to be included within the scope of this invention as defined by the accompanying claims.